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Title:

Statement: Premier comments on Federal Government's restriction of unemployment relief

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STATEMENT

from the Premier

Date..... January 16, 1976

Embargo.....

State Administration Centre,
Victoria Square, Adelaide,
South Australia 5001
228 4811

PREMIER COMMENTS ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S RESTRICTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

Claims that there were a large number of dole cheats in Australia were simply a political gimmick, the Premier, Mr. Dunstan, said today.

Commenting on the Federal Government's decision to restrict the availability of unemployment benefits, Mr. Dunstan said the proposals would cause personal hardship to many people who were genuinely seeking work.

"On all the evidence we have, the majority of people want to work and are actively trying to find jobs. The claim that thousands of people are dole cheats just doesn't stand up to scrutiny.

"There are severe difficulties for young people trying to find work. The number of 18 - 21 year olds who are unemployed has increased by one hundred per cent in the last year.

"The State Government is very concerned with the problem of young people who cannot find jobs, and yesterday I established a working party to look at the long term problems of young people who face unemployment.

"The working party, which will comprise representatives from the Department of Further Education and the Premier's Department, will also co-ordinate all Government policy and activity relating to young people seeking jobs.

"The State Government wants to find a solution to the problem of the unemployed, but it does not want to take the authoritarian approach which the Federal Government has adopted.

"The Federal Government's requirement that people be forced to move to get jobs will cause personal upheavals for many families.

"This approach has been investigated before and found to be very difficult because it is hard to separate people from their families to whom they have a responsibility.

"If the wage earner is forcibly sent somewhere else anywhere in Australia to get a job, then that person has to run two households; one where the wage earner is living and working and also he must send money back to his family.

"As to saying they are going to dictate how a person dresses, most employers are fully aware that many people who are unemployed often cannot afford to spend their scarce money on fashionable clothing, especially if they are trying to support a family.

The Federal Government's approach is simply a political gimmick which will cause hardship to the people in the community who are genuinely seeking work.



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